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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 001402

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB (MGERMANO) AND EUR/PPD (JMLOCKARD)

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TAGS: [SCUL](#) [PHUM](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HOSTS IFTAAR FOR LITHUANIA'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Christian Yarnell
for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (c)

[11](#). (U) SUMMARY: Ambassador Mull celebrated Ramadan on November 5 with 20 leading figures from Lithuania's Muslim community, hosting an Iftaar dinner. The Ambassador highlighted the importance of diversity and tolerance during the event, and Lithuania's chief Islamic religious figure praised the outreach to the country's small Muslim population. The Iftaar was a successful and well-received first foray into this important minority community, which is likely to grow now that Lithuania is a member of the European Union. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (U) Ambassador Mull hosted an Iftaar dinner on November 5 for approximately 20 leaders of Lithuania's Muslim community and other guests. Representatives from Lithuania's small Uzbek, Tajik, and Azeri minorities attended the event in addition to leaders of the Tatars who constitute the overwhelming majority of Lithuania's Muslims. The country's Muslim community dates back over 600 years, when Lithuania formally invited Tatars to settle here. The population of the increasingly secular, even Christian, Lithuanian Tatars today numbers approximately 5,000.

[13](#). (U) Tatar leaders told the Ambassador that, while many Lithuanian Tatars no longer practice religion, an influx of foreign Muslim students has helped to keep their mosques in use. They said that maintaining the historic local mosques was a critical community goal.

[14](#). (C) Diversity and tolerance were the primary themes of the event, and Ambassador Mull highlighted the importance of tolerance in his brief remarks. The guest list reflected the country's diversity, and leaders of other faiths, including the chairman of the Jewish Community of Lithuania, were present. Mufti Romualdas Krinickis, one of a few Lithuanians trained to lead Muslim prayer, praised the Ambassador for his outreach to the country's small Muslim community and led a short prayer as part of the festivities. Krinickis also took the opportunity to denounce terrorism as "a violation of the teachings of Islam." (NOTE: After we had invited Krinickis to the event, the Lithuanian State Security Department shared with us their suspicions about Krinickis's involvement in criminal activities. We will address these suspicions as appropriate in future reporting.)

[15](#). (U) Comment: The Iftaar was a useful opportunity for us to engage a minority community that mainstream Lithuanian society generally overlooks. Lithuania's small Muslim community will undoubtedly grow with the increase in immigration expected to result from the country's EU membership. We hope to use this successful initial foray to strengthen our ties to this community.

MULL